

Do you like to wear blue jeans?
Your favorite pair, like all
clothes made of cotton,
started from a tiny seed.

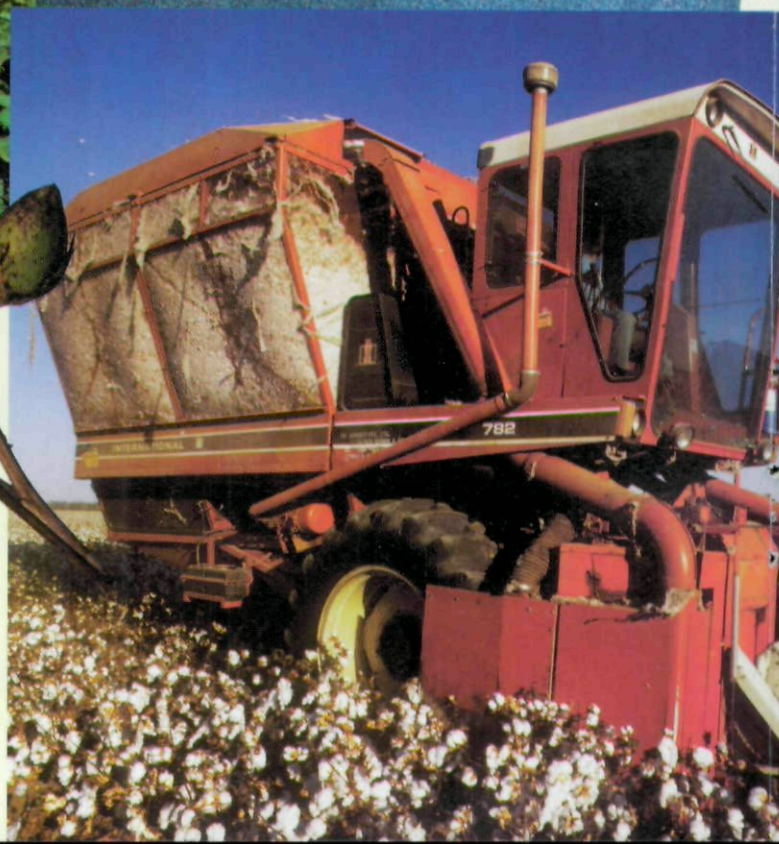
A farmer drives a tractor
that drops rows of cotton
seeds in the dirt. In a few months,
the seeds have grown into bushy
green plants that sprout white
flowers. A seedpod, called a cotton
boll, forms at the base of each flower.
Inside are seeds surrounded by fluffy
white cotton fibers.

Cotton to Jeans

by Rachel Young



The cotton boll grows and
grows until it pops open. Then
a harvesting machine plucks the
puffy cotton bolls from the plants.



The cotton is loaded onto a truck and driven to the mill, where a machine called a cotton gin removes the seeds from the fibers.



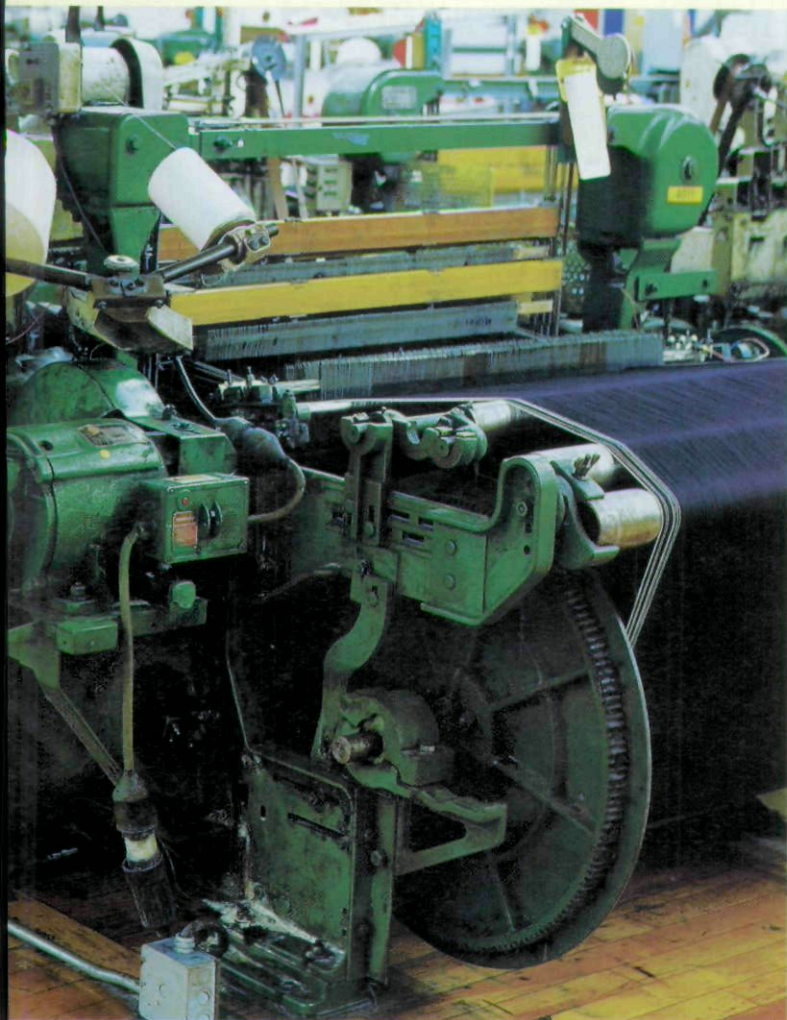
The fluffy cotton fibers are still too tangled and short to make into cloth. They can be easily pulled apart, like in a cotton ball. So the fibers are fed into a carding machine. Stiff wires pull through and straighten the fibers, like a comb or brush pulls through the tangles in your hair.

Next, a spinning machine gathers the straightened fibers into bunches, then twists and twists them together to make yarn that's skinny and very strong.



Some of the white yarn is dipped into vats of blue dye until the yarn is dark, dark blue.

When the blue yarn is dry, it's woven together with white yarn to make a heavy cloth called denim. Because the blue yarns are woven closer together than the white yarns are, the finished cloth looks blue.



A worker guides a machine that cuts denim cloth into all the pieces needed to make a pair of jeans: the front and back of each leg, the pockets, the waistband, and the belt loops. The machine can cut 100 layers of denim at one time.



Another worker
sews the pieces of
cloth together. A
button and zipper
are sewn on too.
Because denim is so
thick and stiff, jeans
are often washed at
the factory to make
the fabric softer and
more comfortable.



The finished jeans are sent to stores all
over the world, where they're ready to be
bought and worn for working or playing
or just sitting around reading.

*Blue jeans can be worn
almost anywhere, and it
all starts with a seed.*



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